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Leaks Are the Target, But Our Values Are the Victim

Robert G. Kaiser

WITH THE REAL 1984 upon us, this seems a good time to pay close attention to the words of a government official who is actually working on an issue with Orwellian implications. The official is Richard K. Willard, 35, acting chief of the civil division in the Department of Justice, and the man responsible for the administration's efforts to stop leaks of official secrets.

Willard is a Washington rarity: he says what he means. No palaver, double-think or newspeak — well, not much. He is the principal author of a proposal to make 127,750 government employes with access to secrets liable for punishment, including loss of their jobs, if they decline to take lie-detector tests in the course of investigations into leaks.

Willard's proposed presidential directive also requires those 127,750 people to submit to the government for clearance, for the rest of their lives, anything they write for public dissemination (including novels, speeches, *anything*) that might touch on secrets they learned while in government, or on anything to do with "intelligence activities."

Why does Willard endorse these ideas? Not because he thinks they will stop leaks. "I don't think we will ever have a leak-free government," he acknowledged in a recent interview. These new requirements, he said, are intended to "change the attitudes of government officials" so they will "come to believe that it is wrong to leak classified information."

"I think if we can reduce the volume of leaks by 50 percent, that would make a very serious contribution to improving our country's ability to carry out foreign policy, defense policy, and improving the effectiveness of our intelligence agencies."

Willard is not hiding what he is talking about, which is intimidation of officials. The language he uses in conversation is revealing. "Leaks are consensual *crimes*," he says. "You have to *target* government employes who have access to [classified] information. . . ." Describing his own decision to abandon the idea of making leaking *per se* a criminal act (which he once recommended), Willard noted that administrative sanctions that had a real prospect of being enforced were probably preferable to criminal sanctions: "If the leaker thinks, 'Well, there's a 10 percent chance of getting fired,' that's probably better than having the leaker think there's one chance in a million of going to jail, in terms of deterring the conduct."

Similarly, his desire to institutionalize the use of polygraphs in leak investigations is meant to be a threat. "We think that will have a deterrent impact — that is, the prospect of the polygraph will discourage people from leaking classified information."

This is gruesome stuff — bad enough to infuriate a lot of senior officials in the Reagan administration. The presidential directive Willard wrote — issued last August — got through the administration by a back door; it wasn't cleared through the usual White House staff system, apparently because Willard and his allies knew that it might not get through. The prospect of routinely "fluttering" senior officials of the American government (that's the jargon for a lie-detector test) apparently provoked Secretary of State George P. Shultz to threaten to resign. But Willard thinks it's just fine — all in the cause of a better "attitude."

How does the threat of mass polygraph examinations and lifetime censorship agreements jibe with his vision of what sort of country the United States ought to be? Willard chooses not to answer exactly that question:

"The policy that we've described is quite limited, in terms of having a number of conditions and qualifications and safeguards," he says reassuringly. Nothing to worry about.

In a public appearance last week Willard insisted that because previous administra-

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AMERICAN SURVEY

The bombs and bullets of outrageous fanatics

WASHINGTON, DC

"Our military forces are back on their feet and standing tall", said President Reagan on December 12th in New York to an appreciative audience of Medal of Honour winners. Earlier that morning America's latest foe—Islamic fanatics prepared to die as they kill—had struck again, this time at the embassy in Kuwait (see page 27). Mr Reagan suggested in his speech that the nation is being obliged to turn its ploughshares back into swords. That may be true in its dealings with Russia. But standing tall against the suicidal fundamentalists emerging from the Middle East's shadows does not call for the costly swords of Mr Reagan's rearmament programme: it calls for spies and concrete barriers, security devices and alertness.

America sees itself, as Mr George Shultz, the secretary of state, said after the attack, as "the defender of peace". In the hard eyes of the new breed of Moslem fanatics in the Middle East, however, it is seen as the defender of Christians, Jews and anachronistic Moslem princes. The seizure of the embassy in Teheran in 1979 and the imprisonment of its staff was an early, painfully drawn-out, warning. Attacks followed against embassies in Libya and Pakistan.

The new stage, as it is now seen, began in April this year when a truck-bomb exploded outside the American embassy in Beirut. In October, suicide-drivers killed nearly 300 American and French members of the multinational force in Lebanon. A similar attack was made in November against the Israeli headquarters at Tyre in south Lebanon. The presumed motivation of these killers—to get the Americans, French and Israelis out of Lebanon, and to punish America for its links with Israel—now has to be extended to include a presumed desire to punish anybody helping Iraq in its war with Iran.

New, and tiresome, precautions will have to be taken, even as new, and sometimes exceedingly tiresome, precautions were taken in the early 1970s to protect airline passengers from terrorism in the sky. The state department is caught between its desire to keep its people safe and its awareness that diplomacy will be poorly served if the country's missions become inaccessible "armed fortresses".

Concrete barriers, to prevent a truck of explosives driving into an embassy compound, seem to be an inevitable first stage. But an exploding truck is only one way to blow up a building: officials fear that Islamic "martyrs", using hexogen, an explosive that is more powerful than TNT and takes up much less space, will not be slow to think up other ways to kill their enemies and win a speedy ride to paradise.

Admiral Stansfield Turner, a former director of the CIA, suggests that the most effective defence is to penetrate the groups that are believed to be behind the campaign. He acknowledges the particular dangers of placing intelligence agents in such tight and dedicated bands but believes that it can and will be done. One difficulty compounding his problems is that so many members of the CIA's Middle East staff, including its senior analyst of the region, were among the 17 Americans killed in the April attack on the Beirut embassy.

The need to unearth information on the terrorists is urgent. Americans anywhere, it is believed, could eventually be their target, and the prime target would be President Reagan himself. A couple of days before the Thanksgiving holiday on November 24th, information came through that the Middle East bombers might have designs on the White House and state department in Washington (tension had already been heightened by a non-Middle Eastern bomb in the senate building on November 7th). Large lorries filled with sand, plus police cars, were soon placed at the entrances to the state department and the White House: the biggest collection of trucks, at an entrance to the White House, has since been replaced by a less unseemly barricade of white concrete and bushes, and concrete fixtures are being put in place at the state department's entrances.

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Flights in Lebanon By Navy's F14 Jets Arouse Controversy

By Michael Getler
Washington Post Staff Writer

The frequent reconnaissance missions flown by U.S. Navy F14 jets over Lebanon are seen as necessary by military commanders for protection of U.S. Marines on the ground there. But the flights also have become controversial among some critics here because of their potential for touching off a larger conflict with Syria.

There has been both public and, officials say, some private government second-guessing about kinds of weapons used to retaliate against Syrian antiaircraft positions in Lebanon that fired on the F14s recently. Questions have been raised about whether the Navy was right to retaliate first with Navy bombers and then with the huge 16-inch guns of the battleship New Jersey.

Some senior officials said this week that they suspect the United States will respond primarily with naval gunfire in the future because the retaliatory air raid on Dec. 4 involved the loss of two of the 28 attacking U.S. jets, the death of one pilot and the capture of another by the Syrians.

But there has been relatively little public discussion or official information about the F14 missions themselves. The Pentagon normally does not discuss reconnaissance missions.

Interviews with military and civilian officials and some former government officials, however, suggest that the issue of the F14 flights is like much of the rest of the American political and military involvement in Lebanon. It is a mission that started out with rather simple intentions—to collect information and dramatize Washington's view that it had a right to protect its forces with such measures. But then the F14s became the focus of unpredictable military action complicating other objectives of the U.S. presence in Lebanon.

One example cited by military officials is that the administration's overall Middle East objectives include weaning Syria away from its close military relationship with the Soviet Union. Yet, by flying F14s over Syrian positions and then bombing and shelling the Syrians after they fire on those planes, the United States may be driving Damascus even further into Soviet arms.

Pairs of unarmed, carried-based F14s, carrying a special "pod" below the fuselage with cameras and other equipment, began flying over Lebanon several times a week early in September after the U.S. Marines there became caught in the middle of renewed fighting between Lebanese government forces and Syrian-backed Druze and Shiite Moslem militias.

Lebanon is a tiny and narrow country, 20 to 50 miles wide and 135 miles long. High-speed, picture-taking jets fly mostly north and south because just a few extra seconds of flying eastward would take them over Syria, which is off limits. The U.S. jets also do not fly over the Bekaa region of eastern Lebanon where the bulk of Syria's estimated 40,000 troops inside Lebanon are based.

U.S. military officers said, however, it is necessary to fly over Syrian positions in Lebanon and those of Syrian-backed Druze and other Moslem factions closer to where the Marines are in Beirut. Although the evidence is murky of Syrians firing directly on the Marines, officials say there is no doubt that they supply ammunition and support to those who are firing at them.

These officers said the Syrian and factional positions are in some cases close together or intermingled, that it is hard not to overfly all of them in such close quarters, and that Soviet-built 130mm artillery in the hands of the Syrians, with a range of 18 miles, is located right behind the Druze and Shiite positions.

For a while, officials said, the Marines could pinpoint enemy artillery positions by radar and by tracing the arc of fire back to its origin. But as the shelling escalated, Washington Post correspondent William Claiborne reported from Beirut, the military wanted to "catalog the potential targets or origins of fire," according to U.S. officials there.

"This was a prudent reaction," the official said. "The military commander on the ground wanted to know who was shooting at him" and from where the firing might come.

U.S. intelligence is weak in Lebanon, sources said, and the Marines cannot patrol much beyond their position at the Beirut international airport.

Retired Adm. Stansfield Turner, director of the CIA in the Carter administration, said two high-flying SR71 spy planes operating out of Cyprus could provide continuous reconnaissance over Lebanon without risk of being fired on from the ground. Saying the SR71, which flies at 80,000 feet, is capable of spotting artillery and anything else the F14 can pick up at much lower altitudes, Turner argued that the more visible F14s are being used mostly as a show of force and resolve that runs an unnecessary risk of an expanded conflict.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Left Hand, Right Hand

By Flora Lewis

PARIS, Dec. 15 — For years now, U.S. foreign policy in Central America has been undermined by private or semi-private U.S. groups encouraging the extreme right to disregard official Washington warnings.

A senior State Department official said not long ago that it must be dreadfully confusing for the local politicians. They are told publicly that the U.S. supports democracy and reforms, and opposes death squads and wanton murder of peasants.

But then they hear whispers from Americans who seem influential that all this talk is for public consumption, and that the U.S. backs anyone who fights Communists. The contradiction is widely known in Washington.

The private activities probably violate the Logan Act, passed in 1799 and still on the books. It forbids unauthorized U.S. citizens to deal with foreign governments in an attempt to influence foreign policy, which well-placed people were already trying to do in the earliest days of the Republic. Aaron Burr was an example. The act is considered virtually unenforceable now.

But there are disturbing signs that private involvement in covert actions has substantially expanded well beyond political and economic measures, exemplified by the I.T.T. in Chile before the Pinochet coup, to paramilitary activities.

Whether or not this subverts U.S. policy depends on what the policy really is. In any case, such involvement shields participants from the legal oversight mandated for specially cleared Congressional committees. According to Adm. Stansfield Turner, former C.I.A. Director, it also probably blocks C.I.A. control once operations are launched, risking runaway disasters.

There is an argument in Washington about whether the Administration is deliberately disguising an attempt to overthrow the Sandinista Government in Nicaragua and help the far right elsewhere, or whether it is lax in reining in its own supporters.

John Carbaugh, the busy former aide to Senator Jesse Helms, said flatly that the C.I.A. was totally in charge, sometimes through private contracts or by accepting "contributions." These seem to include planes and possibly U.S. mercenaries sent to perform sabotage. Mr. Carbaugh has intimate knowledge of devious moves in Central America, but he doesn't hide his contempt for what the C.I.A. is doing.

Philip Taubman and Jeff Gerth of The New York Times recently tracked several privately owned American planes involved in secret operations, but they haven't been able to pinpoint the source of the orders or the money. Argentine soldiers helped train "contras" in Honduras and plan attacks in Nicaragua before the Falkland war, but they are no longer available, Congressional sources say.

The U.S. military and paramilitary network is now expanding through the region. The Administration says it endorses the efforts of the Latin Contadora group to demilitarize Central America and promote negotiated settlements. But U.S. actions cast doubt on the declarations, even as Henry Kissinger and his commission tour the area preparing to recommend huge sums of economic aid to evolve moderate regimes interested in negotiating.

It is easier to see the political underpinning for the conflicting drive to the right. There are conservative "think tanks" in the Washington area that make a point of having good relations with such ultras as Salvador's Roberto D'Aubuisson and Guatemala's Mario Sandoval Alarcon, who are officially shunned by the U.S. because of their murderous reputations.

Among them are the Council on Inter-American Security, the American Security Council, and the National Strategic Information Center, the last organized in the 1960's by William Casey, now C.I.A. Director. Retired U.S. military officers and former C.I.A. officials are among their active members.

They travel to Central America, and arrange high-level meetings for their friends when they come to Washington. These sessions are then used by the Latins to spread word that they have confirmed secret U.S. Government backing, despite public denunciations. U.S. ambassadors have confided that they are powerless to reverse the impact.

If the policy is what the Administration announces, to promote moderate, democratic regimes capable of social and economic development that will head off Communist advance, then it is being flouted by its servants and friends. If that is only lip service, it is not only deceiving the country and wasting a lot of money, it is compounding the danger.

The jungle of intrigue, undercover attacks and provocation has helped make Central America the mess it is. There have been no successes. More militarization, in collusion with corporations, covert or open with U.S. troops, diminishes the prospects of both security and freedom. Mr. Kissinger should take the hidden side into account in his report.